

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study which briefly generates the bases to conduct the study, the research questions as the guidance for this study and the purposes of the study. It also describes the significance of this study, the clarification of the key terms used in this study and an overview of the thesis organization of this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching and learning are not complete without assessment. Assessment can be used to appraise students' knowledge and abilities (Poehner, 2007, p. 323). It means that assessment is important in the teaching and learning process as a means to measure students' capability. Moreover, assessment provides information of the effectiveness of the teaching program employed, students' progress and their performance in learning (Cameron, 2001, p. 222; Douglas, 2014, p. 20). This information can be used to lead better improvement in the teaching and learning. Thus, assessment is essential and inseparable in the teaching and learning process (O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

Regarding the teaching and learning English in Indonesian contexts, there are four skills that should be mastered. Reading is one of the skills which is important to be mastered since it is essential not only for carriers, studies or pleasure but also for language acquisition (Harmer, 2007, p. 99). It helps students to think in the target language, enriches vocabulary, and improves other general language skills (Mikulecky & Jeffries, 2004, p. 1) in foreign language learning. The importance of reading in Indonesia can be seen from the fact that it is the main part of national examination which measures students' reading competence as being targeted by the national content standard (see Depdiknas, 2011) in junior and senior high schools.

In assessing reading comprehension, many techniques can be employed such as gap filling, cloze procedure, information transfer tasks, and multiple-

choice items for measuring students' development and performance (Hughes, 2003 p. 138; Brown, 2004 p. 190). It means that most educators still use traditional assessment in the form of paper-pencil tests for testing reading comprehension, including in Indonesian educational practices (Widiatmo, 2013). Although these kinds of assessment are regarded practical, simple, and efficient to administer and easy to score (McNamara, 1996; Pinter, 2006), some experts assume that they do not fully measure learners' performance (Brown, 2001; McNamara, 1996 p. 4). As a result, the educators try to develop alternative assessments to seek the effective ways to measure reading comprehension and the changes of teaching methods that focus on the process of learning (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 134). One kind of alternative assessments is dynamic assessment.

Dynamic assessment is considered suitable to assess reading comprehension because the best time of assessing reading comprehension is while the students are reading and engaging with the texts (Valencia & Pearson, 2010). Moreover, using dynamic assessment as a tool in assessing students' reading comprehension helps the students to be aware of their problems in reading (Naeini, 2014, p. 1306) and their learning potential (Lantolf & Poehner, 2011). Dynamic assessment is assessment followed by instructional intervention which focuses on process-orientation and the integration of instruction and assessment (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002, p. 23; Thouésny, 2010, p. 3517; Zhang, 2013, p. 38). Based on the explanation above, it can be assumed that dynamic assessment is suitable to be applied in assessing students' reading comprehension and can be integrated in the teaching reading.

This research is conducted to see the implementation of dynamic assessment and its contribution to students' reading performance. Based on the researcher's observation through scientific and literature studies, the implementation of dynamic assessment has not widely applied in Indonesia and in reading classroom specifically. For that reason, this study attempts to reveal the implementation of dynamic assessment as one of alternative assessments in assessing reading comprehension. Specifically, this study attempts to find out how the

implementation of dynamic assessment affects students' reading comprehension performance and to reveal students' opinions towards the implementation of dynamic assessment itself.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

- a. How does the implementation of dynamic assessment affect students' reading comprehension performance?
- b. What are students' opinions through the implementation of dynamic assessment in reading comprehension performance?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the questions above, this study is intended to meet the following purposes:

- a. To find out how the implementation of dynamic assessment affect students' reading comprehension performance.
- b. To find out students' opinions on the implementation of dynamic assessment in reading comprehension performance.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The results of this study contribute to some aspects. Theoretically, the results of this study can be used to enrich the literature reviews on language assessment especially reading assessment. It also contributes to the approaches of assessing students' reading comprehension performance. Practically, the results of this study can encourage the teacher to apply dynamic assessment as one of reading assessment in language classroom. Professionally, the results of this study can provide information for the teachers of how to use dynamic assessment in reading classroom, especially and in the classroom generally.

1.5 Definitions of the Key Terms

Alternative Assessment

Alternative assessment refers to the means used in assessing students' performance where the evaluation is focused on process-oriented in which the students have opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned (Dikli, 2003, p. 17).

Dynamic Assessment

Dynamic assessment is integration between instruction and assessment which aims to promote students' learning potentials (Poehner & Lantolf, 2004). In this study, dynamic assessment is integrated in the teaching of reading.

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of simultaneously extraction and construction meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Snow, 2002, p. xiii).

Reading Comprehension Performance

Reading comprehension performance relates to students' ability in doing reading assessment. In this study, students' reading comprehension performance are assessed and taught by using dynamic assessment.

Opinions

Opinions in this study refer to students' judgment about the implementation of dynamic assessment on their reading comprehension performance.

1.6 Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter One is a general introduction which relates to the backgrounds of the study, statement of the problems, research questions, purposes of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, hypothesis, the definitions of key terms and thesis organization. Chapter Two discusses the theoretical framework underpinning the study which involves the concept of reading comprehension, the concept of assessment, reading assessment, dynamic assessment, and the procedures of

applying it in reading classroom and previous studies on dynamic assessment. Chapter Three presents research design, population and sample, techniques of data collection and techniques of data analysis used in this study. Chapter Four reveals the teaching programs used in implementing dynamic assessment in students' reading comprehension performance and reading classroom. Chapter Five presents students' opinions toward the implementation of dynamic assessment. Moreover, the last chapter delivers conclusions drawn from the previous chapters and offers suggestions.